Superfund Removal Program Fact Sheet

Dallas PCE Site

Dallas, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania **May 4, 2006**

EPA Begins Investigation

The US Environmental Protection Agency Region 3 (EPA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) are collaborating to investigate suspected tetrachloroethylene (PCE) contamination in a large area in the vicinity of the 309/415 "Split" in Dallas, Pennsylvania. In conjunction with this investigation, EPA is evaluating the possibility that PCE contamination may be present in soil underlying the Dallas Shopping Center on Route 309 which is located within the broader study area. This fact sheet is to inform you about the activities you may expect to see at the shopping center and its immediate environs in the coming weeks.

What is Tetrachloroethylene (PCE)?
Tetrachloroethylene is a manufactured chemical that is widely used by business and industry. It is has several names, including PCE, PERC, perchloroethylene, perchlor, and perclene. PCE is a solvent found in numerous consumer products. It is effective for dry cleaning fabrics and degreasing metals. PCE is used commercially by dry cleaners, auto body shops, machine shops, and print shops, as well as many other businesses. It is a component of many common household cleaning products. Health effects associated with PCE depend on the quantity of PCE present and the length of time exposure lasts.

Why is EPA investigating PCE at the Dallas Shopping Center?
EPA is investigating at the Dallas Shopping Center to determine if PCE contamination is present in soils underlying the shopping center buildings and the parking lot. The use of PCE was not always as well regulated as it is now; so it is possible that historic operating procedures of tenant-businesses known to have used PCE may have resulted in contamination of subsurface soils. If contamination is present, EPA wants to determine whether it poses human health or environmental risks.

How will EPA investigate for PCE contamination?
EPA will first collect soil gas samples from beneath the buildings and the parking lot pavement. Inside the buildings, samples will be collected from several locations after appropriate access agreements are obtained. Sampling ports will be installed in unobtrusive locations, such as inside closets or behind counters. The ports will consist of 1-inch diameter steel tubes inserted two to four feet into the sub-slab soil. At the bottom of each tube, a retractable door will shield a porous screen. When the door is opened, air can be pulled from the soil. The air will be drawn into the tubes and up into devices known as SUMMA canisters. The SUMMA canisters are about the size of a basketball. They can collect air samples over relatively short periods or over periods of

several hours or days. When the canisters are closed, they are sent to designated laboratories where the contents can be analyzed.

Soil beneath the parking lot will be sampled using a device called a geo-probe. The geo-probe is a sampling device mounted on a small truck. It consists of a small hydraulic hammer capable of pushing sampling tubes directly into the ground. The tubes operate similarly to those described above. Several locations throughout the parking lot will be sampled.

Will sampling disrupt business?
Disruptions and inconvenience will be kept to a minimum during the installation of sampling ports and geo-probes. To the extent possible, sampling ports will be installed and samples collected after hours. Workers will likely be dressed in protective clothing and may wear masks to prevent inhalation of hazardous chemicals in the event such compounds are encountered during sampling activities. Protective clothing is part of EPA's protocol for workers. It is precautionary and not an indication of actual or potential risks to passers-by.

What is the schedule of work?
It is anticipated that sampling activities will begin the week of May 8th. All sampling ports and geo-probes should be installed by May 12th. Samples will be collected during the installation process. Additional sampling events may occur in the coming months, depending on the results of the first round of sampling. After samples are collected and analyzed, the results will be provided to the building owners and tenants. EPA anticipates the first round of sampling results will be available by June 12, 2006.

Next steps…
EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment. In the event PCE contamination is found to be present, cleanup measures will be identified and implemented in a timeframe warranted by the levels of risk identified. If necessary, EPA will take immediate actions to eliminate exposure and protect the health of workers and patrons. However, there is no current indication that a substantial risk is present.

For additional information…

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For information about PCE, log onto the website of the ***Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry*** *at* www.atsdr.cdc.gov *or contact*

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